



Superior Court of California County of Riverside

4050 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92501

MEDIA ADVISORY

January 14, 2014

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(Electronic version available at:

<http://www.riverside.courts.ca.gov/media/media.shtml>)

RIVERSIDE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT ANNOUNCES VETERANS COURT GRADUATION

RIVERSIDE COUNTY: Riverside County Superior Court is pleased to announce that the Riverside Veterans Court, presided over by Judge Mark Johnson, will celebrate its second graduating class on Friday, January 31, 2014 at 2:30pm in Department 1.

The Superior Court of California, County of Riverside Veterans Court is a collaborative effort between the court and agencies such as the Riverside County District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation Department, Department of Mental Health and the Veterans Administration (VA). Veterans Court, which began in January 2012, is a treatment-based alternative to incarceration – authorized by California Penal Code § 1170.9 - for veterans in the community charged with committing a crime linked to issues such as traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, or mental health issues resulting from his or her service in the U.S. armed forces.

The six graduating veterans have successfully completed a minimum 18-month intensive treatment program, or a 12-month program for veterans convicted of specified misdemeanors that includes regular drug and alcohol testing, weekly individual and group counseling, mental health services, self-help meetings, alongside support from veterans and Veterans Court partners in the community including Judge Johnson, himself a decorated combat veteran. Ongoing aftercare services will be available to all graduates to ensure their continued success.

The keynote speakers for the ceremony will be Seymore “Sy” Kaplan, a World War II veteran from the Coachella Valley who fought under General Patton and Congressman Mark Takano, representative for the 41st Congressional District, which includes the communities of Riverside, Moreno Valley, and Perris. Rep. Takano currently serves on the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee.

Members of the press and public are invited to attend the graduation ceremony scheduled for Friday, January 31, 2014 at 2:30 p.m. in the Historic Courthouse, Department 1; 4050 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92501.

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